THE ARTIST'S LIBRARY

VAN DYCK

By LIONEL CUST

Part I.

VAN DYCK BY LIONEL CUST (PART ONE):
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VAN DYCK

BY LIONEL CUST, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

IN TWO PARTS
PART ONE

LONDON MCMIII
AT THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN

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LIST OF PLATES IN PART I.

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SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK

I

THE City of Antwerp has always played a prominent part in the history of Art. Living in one of the great centres of commerce in the world, its busy burghers and merchants were enabled to reach a high level of culture and intelligence, while their ever-increasing stores of wealth gave them power to develop these qualities in several useful directions. Both in its situation and in the general character of its citizens the City of Antwerp held a position analogous to that of the City of Venice on the Adriatic; and had Antwerp been a Free State, like the Hanse Towns further north, it might have had a history as varied and thrilling as that of Venice. Antwerp was however one of the most valuable appanages of the House of Hapsburg, and its fate was for centuries to be ground under the iron heel of Spain. The Hapsburgs were nevertheless steady patrons of art; and in the Netherlands, if liberty was little more than the baseless fabric of a dream, the practice of the fine arts was fostered and carried on, as one of the most flourishing national industries.

A national art must reflect the spirit of the people, by whom it is created and wrought into existence. The art of the Flemings differs from the art of their neighbours, the Dutch, in accordance with the difference in the circumstances of the people. The Dutch, a simple strenuous folk, ever engaged in a struggle with nature for their very existence, evolved an art, strongly imbued with the special *genius loci*, and characteristic of a simple, stay-at-home race of peasants. The earlier phases of Flemish art correspond to the periods, when Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent

were laying the foundations of their commercial prosperity; the later phases, the triumphs of Rubens, Van Dyck, and their contemporaries, reveal the time, when the Flemish nation realised its wealth, and spent it freely. Art followed in the wake of commerce, and was borne in its argosies along the waterways of the world. Hence it came about that few artists have exercised greater influence in their day throughout the civilised world than Rogier Van der Weyden of Bruges and Peter Paul Rubens of Antwerp.

The simplicity and purity of the schools of painting, initiated by the Van Eycks, Memlinc, Metsys and Geraert David, had been undermined and almost destroyed by the disintegrating influence of Italy and Rome. Three potent influences ruled at Rome, and thence over the world of art; the virile majesty, the *terribil via*, of Michelangelo, the pure academic perfection of Raphael, and the remains of the bastard classical art, which ancient Rome had bequeathed to an admiring, but undiscerning posterity. All these three influences wrought havoc, like the sirens of old, among Flemish artists, and indeed all who came within their range. Abandoning their native instincts, artists acquired by rote and repeated the violence of Michelangelo, without his greatness; they copied the purity and perfection of Raphael, but wholly failed to seize or comprehend his peculiar fount of inspiration; and they utilised the ruins and remains of classical antiquity in a false and mistaken idea of the picturesque, without a thought of the deeper lessons to be learnt from them, or of the true position of these ruins in the history of Art.

From this slough of decadence Flemish art was rescued by the supreme genius of one man, Peter Paul Rubens, just as a little later the neighbour art of Holland was to be arrested on a similar downward path by the colossal genius of Rembrandt. The life and work of Rubens are without the scope of this short essay. It is important however for the proper comprehension of Van Dyck and his work to realise the change brought about in the world of art by the originality, the indomitable activity, and peculiar technical skill of Rubens. It was Rubens, who diverted the minds of northern artists from the unattainable heights of Michelangelo and Raphael to the more human, more warm-blooded art of Titian and Paolo Veronese, as well as to the virile energy and masterly simplicity of Mantegna.

For forty years therefore Rubens reigned supreme over

Flemish painting, and to him and his works all artists old and young looked in order to draw the sustenance of their art.

Among these was one young man, who, although twenty-two years younger than Rubens, and standing to him in the relation of pupil to master, yet during his short life fought for, reached and shared the same pedestal of greatness, and in one branch of painting, that of portraiture, nobly dared to excel and to win for himself as undying fame as that of his great master. This young man was Anthony Van Dyck.

The name, Van Dyck, was not uncommon in Antwerp, but it is difficult to trace the painter's ancestry back beyond his grandfather, Anthony Van Dyck, a wealthy and prosperous silk merchant, who died in 1580 and was buried in the Cathedral. His wife's name was Cornelia Pruystincx, and a portrait of her exists in the Galleria Estense at Modena. Their elder son, Frans Van Dyck, succeeded his father in the silk business, and became wealthy and prosperous. The family were closely connected with the Church and the clergy at Antwerp; and Frans Van Dyck acted as director of the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the Cathedral. He was twice married. His first wife died soon after the birth of a son, who quickly followed his mother. Seven months after the loss of his wife, on February 6, 1590, Frans Van Dyck was married for the second time to Maria, daughter of Dirk Cupers, or Cuypers, and of Catharina Conincx, his wife. The union was fruitful. Maria became the mother of twelve children, of whom two sons and five daughters survived. The eldest daughter, Catharina, married Adriaen Dierckx, a notary at Antwerp, but the other four all entered the service of the Church. Anna (or Gertrude) became an Augustinian nun, and the three others, Susanna, Cornelia, and Isabella (or Elizabeth) all became *béguines* at Antwerp. The younger son, Theodorus (or Dirk) Waltmannus Van Dyck, also entered the service of the Church, as pastor of Minderhout, and professor of theology. The seventh child and elder surviving son of Frans and Maria Van Dyck was Anthonis or Antoon (Anthony), who on many occasions in after-life shewed how strong a bond of family affection united the brothers and sisters together.

Anthony Van Dyck was born on March 22, 1599, in a house close to the Groot Markt at Antwerp, known by the sign of 'Den Berendans.' The birth-place is still shewn, but has been

modernised beyond all recognition. The day after his birth he was carried into the great cathedral church close by and baptized. Shortly after, his parents removed to a house at No. 42 Korte Nieuw Straat, known as 'Het Kastel van Ryssel,' but soon transferred themselves to No. 46 in the same street, 'Het Stat Gent.' In this house the painter's early years were spent, the first event of importance being the death of his mother, Maria Cupers, who died on April 17, 1607, shortly after the birth of her twelfth child.

There was nothing in the history of Van Dyck's family upon the father's side to account for his early precocity in art, but his relations on the mother's side seem to have been connected with the art circles of Antwerp. Maria Cupers herself is stated to have been very skilful in embroidery. One Servaes Cuypers, perhaps a near relation, was entered in the Guild of St. Luke in 1608 as a "leerjonger" and "huys-scilder," and in the following year was admitted a "meester" and described as a "borduurwerker." In addition to this, Van Dyck was possibly related on his mother's side to the painter, Jan Snellincx, whose second wife was Paulina Cuypers. The first wife of Snellincx had been Helena de Jode, aunt to Pieter de Jode, the engraver, to Gertrude, wife of the painter Jan de Wael, and to Elizabeth, wife of the painter Jan Brueghel. The circumstances of Van Dyck's early life, even if the relationship be not proved, point to a close intimacy with these painters and their families, sufficient to account for an early development of artistic impulse.

In 1609 the boy was placed as a pupil in the studio of Hendrik Van Balen, one of the leading artists in the city. Van Balen was in this year "opperdeken" of the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp, and he inscribed the young Van Dyck on the lists of the guild as his pupil. It is noteworthy that another boy artist, entered on the same day, was Joost Sutterman, who afterwards became the well-known portrait-painter at the Court of Florence. Van Balen was one of the chief exponents of the old Flemish tradition of painting, as handed down by the Brueghels. He was an old friend of Rubens, who had been a fellow-pupil with him in the studio of Adam Van Noordt, and though he lacked the fire and vigour of Rubens, and possessed but little originality, his works are characterised by a grace and accuracy, which formed a good basis of teaching for his pupils. Many artists of note had already passed through his studio, notably Frans

Snyders, the great animal-painter. At the time, when Van Dyck entered the studio of Van Balen, the influence of Rubens was already so dominant, that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for any young student to walk in any other path but that marked out by the great master.

As early as 1613 Van Dyck had already begun to paint portraits. In 1615 he was sufficiently advanced to have been able to set up for himself in a house in the Lange Mindebroeder Straat, sharing it, as it appears, with his friend and fellow-pupil, Jan Brueghel, the younger. Two lawsuits relating to the disposition of his grandmother's property, shew that in 1616 and 1617 he was living independently of his parents. At this time he painted a set of heads, representing Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles. Even at this date he appears to have had an assistant, Harmen Servaes, who copied this set of paintings. Perhaps this was a relation, and son of Servaes Cuypers, mentioned above. At all events these paintings were considered remarkable, and were exhibited at the house of a connoisseur and picture-dealer, Willem Verhagen, at Antwerp, where they were seen and admired by many persons of note, including the great Rubens himself. Portions of these paintings or the copies are to be found in the collections at Dresden and Schleissheim, at Althorp in England, and elsewhere; the whole set was engraved by C. Van Caukerken.

On February 21, 1618, Van Dyck paid his entrance-fees for admission to the freedom of the Guild of St. Luke, an honour unusual for so young a painter, and in the following July he paid up his wine-dues. Van Dyck was even at this time busy with portraits. There is no evidence to shew that he was ever a pupil in Rubens's studio or ever received any actual instruction from the great painter. Rubens however was his obvious model, and several portraits, long attributed to Rubens, can now be safely allotted to Van Dyck, such as the portraits of an old man and an old woman in the Dresden Gallery, dated 1618, the portrait of a man in the Brussels Gallery, dated 1619, the portrait said to be that of PhilipRubens, belonging to Sir Francis Cook at Richmond, the portrait of an aged woman holding a rose in the Cassel Gallery, and others. Fine as they are, the early portraits by Van Dyck lack the precise knowledge and practised hand of Rubens, though they are none the less true harbingers of Van Dyck's future greatness. In 1618 Van Dyck received a commission to paint for

the church of the Dominicans (now St. Paul) at Antwerp a picture in a series displaying the Passion of Jesus Christ, and representing *Christ bearing the Cross.* This picture shews numerous crudities and inadvertencies, especially in the composition, a point in which Van Dyck never shewed any great strength, but its power for a youth of nineteen is undeniable. It must have been closely followed or perhaps preceded by a painting of *The Good Samaritan* belonging to Baron Sanguszko in Galicia. A third painting, closely allied to these, is that of *St. Sebastian tied to a Tree* in the Munich Gallery, in which similar motives of the centurion on a white horse, and the stalwart Rubens-like executioners, are very obvious. In these pictures, though the main influence is that of Rubens, it is easy to perceive a strain of another kind, that of the great Italian Masters. This is especially shewn in the treatment of the nude, a prominent object in each picture. Whereas Rubens in his treatment of the nude tried in his inimitable way to reproduce nature, and by a skilful use of carnation and pearly tints together with a delicate beauty of the skin, produced a sense of vitality, which pulsates and palpitates as if it were in the full sunshine of life, even in some cases to an excess of realism, Van Dyck followed the example and convention of the great Italian Masters, and treated his nude as the great centre of light in his picture, the contours strongly marked and powerfully modelled, but with a somewhat academic severity. So early as this did he shew the influence of his other great master. It seems probable that it was in Rubens's house that the young Van Dyck first came under the golden spell of Titian. Rubens, whose greatness admitted a full and generous appreciation of the greatness of others, had been perhaps the first northern artist, who turned aside from the academic graces and perfections of the schools of Raphael and the Carracci to the glowing and sensuous paintings of Titian, Tintoretto, and the Venetian School. For Titian he had an unbounded admiration. He copied many of his works in Venice, Mantua, Genoa, and Madrid, and kept these copies in his studio. Furthermore he possessed some fine original paintings by Titian himself. Rubens was however too great a pioneer of painting, his genius was too spontaneous and original, to be merely influenced by older masters. There is no mere copying of Titian in Rubens's paintings. A Fleming by race, he remained a Fleming in painting, and created a new and triumphant school of Flemish art.

It was different with Van Dyck. His soft and rather feminine character was ever susceptible to impressions and emotions from without. Such deficiencies as he shewed in creative power were compensated for by his extraordinary facility in appropriating and assimilating the ideas of others. With the grandiose decorative ideas of Rubens, Van Dyck shewed in good truth little sympathy, and his least successful efforts are those in which he attempted to compete with his master on his master's own ground. In the paintings by Titian he found his true source of inspiration.

But for the time being Van Dyck had to work under the yoke of Rubens, whose commanding influence dominated Antwerp and the neighbouring provinces, and left but small opportunities of success for a rival in the same field. Rubens was at the zenith of his genius. The exact date, on which Van Dyck entered Rubens's studio as his assistant (*allievo*), cannot be determined. Rubens had picked out the young painter, who not improbably was proud to join the remarkable circle of artists working under and for Rubens, considering that they comprised such men as Abraham van Diépenbeck, Justus van Egmont, Erasmus Quellin, and others who gained distinction in later days.

II

Bellori, the historian of art, writing some thirty years after the death of Van Dyck, states that he had been told by Sir Kenelm Digby, that Van Dyck was first employed by Rubens to make reduced copies of his paintings for the engravers, whom Rubens selected, to work from. The drawing of the *Battle of the Amazons*, engraved by Lucas Vorsterman, has been specified as the work of Van Dyck. There is nothing improbable in this statement, although it is hardly credible that a painter, who had already been admitted to the freedom of the Guild of St. Luke, should lend himself for long to so inferior a task.

Rubens in carrying out his great compositions used to prepare a sketch in oils on a small scale. This was drawn out on the intended scale by his assistants. In some cases Rubens did the whole subsequent painting with his own hand, but in others he left the bulk of it to his assistants, only putting final touches himself to complete it to his satisfaction. So well known was this practice, that in March 1620, when the Company of Jesus at Antwerp gave Rubens a commission for thirty paintings with which they might adorn the Jesuits' Church, it was stipulated that these pictures, for which Rubens would naturally prepare the sketches, should be drawn out on the full-size scale by Van Dyck, in preference to the other assistants, while the father-superior also promised that one painting at least on a smaller scale for one of the side altars should be entrusted entirely to Van Dyck's own hand.

It appears certain that the famous set of paintings representing the *History of the Consul, Decius Mus*, now in the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna, were originally drawn out to be copied in

reverse for tapestries, and that both the drawings and the subsequent paintings were the work of Van Dyck. There is also a well-attested story how that one day, when Rubens had gone out for a ride in the country, his assistants, while playing pranks in the studio, managed to damage a painting, on which Rubens was at work. In their dismay, they could think of no painter among them capable of repairing the injury, except Van Dyck, who restored the damage, though his work did not escape the vigilant eye of their master upon his return.

It is not likely that Van Dyck, while engaged as chief assistant to Rubens, should have had many opportunities for executing large historical works upon his own account. During the two years or so, when he was so occupied, his time can have been but little his own. It is certain however that he painted a great number of portraits, and gained a great reputation for them. Some of these have passed for many years as the work of Rubens, and truly it is difficult to distinguish for certain between the works of the two painters in this line. Rubens however was no mere portrait-painter. He painted portraits, as part of the range of his art, and never failed to make a fine picture in painting them, but his mind was given rather to the pictorial expression of the subject, than to close observation and subtle interpretation of character. He did not seek such commissions, for, as he told Lord Arundel, when consenting to paint him and his Countess together, "Although I have refused to execute the portraits of many princes and noblemen, especially of his Lordship's rank, yet from the Earl I am bound to receive the honour, which he does me in commanding my services, regarding him, as I do, in the light of an Evangelist to the world of art, and the great supporter of our profession."

Among the portraits painted by Van Dyck at this time are, as might be expected, those of his friends *Jan Brueghel* (Munich), *Pieter Brueghel, Jan de Wael and his wife* (Munich), and *Jan Snellincx.* The good burghers of Antwerp and their wives sat to him in numbers, the ladies distinguished by their circular ruffs, their gold brocaded bodices, and the fashion then in vogue of brushing the hair straight off the forehead, to be fastened by a circlet of jewels round the back hair. Among these ladies were Rubens's wife, *Isabella Brant* (perhaps the picture at the Hermitage), and his future sister-in-law, *Susanna Fourment* (also at the Hermitage).

Many were painted in pairs, such as *M. and Mme. de Witte* (belonging to M. Arnold de Pret Roose de Calesberg at Antwerp); some in a group together, like the husband and wife in the Academy at Buda-Pest, or a mother with her child, such as the fine portrait belonging to Earl Brownlow, and that of *Susanna Fourment with her child* mentioned above. To these may be added the two fine portraits of young women in the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna, the portrait of a lady, long called in error Lady Kenilmeeky, belonging to the Earl of Denbigh at Newnham Paddox, and many others. It should be noticed that Van Dyck's senior and contemporary, Cornelis de Vos, was at this same time painting portraits, which both in handling and costume are sometimes difficult to distinguish from those painted by Van Dyck or Rubens.

Van Dyck at any rate obtained a reputation above those of his contemporaries and fellow-pupils, as shewn by the commission given by the Jesuit father. Three or four months after this commission, which does not seem for certain to have been carried out so far as Van Dyck was concerned, Van Dyck had attracted the notice of no less personages than the Earl and Countess of Arundel. The Countess of Arundel left England in June 1620, to travel on the Continent for the education of her two sons. It is evident that she began her journey by visiting Antwerp, for a correspondent writing to Arundel from Antwerp in July 1620, mentions the Countess as sitting for her portrait to Rubens, and goes on to say that Van Dyck is always with Rubens, and his works are becoming scarcely less esteemed than those of his master; that he was a young man of one-and-twenty, his parents being persons of considerable property in the city; and that it would be difficult therefore to induce him to remove from Antwerp, especially as he must perceive the rapid fortune which Rubens was amassing. It is evident from this that either Arundel, in his capacity of patron and general agent for art, or his wife, desired to secure the services of Van Dyck and to send him over to England.

III

THOMAS HOWARD, Earl of Arundel, is famous, as the great amateur and patron of art of his day, and in his artistic enterprises he was supported by his equally remarkable wife, Alethea Talbot. Arundel not only collected works of art of every description, but he also employed himself and found employment elsewhere for living artists. In his native country, England, the art of painting was not at a very high level. It was mainly confined to portraiture, and this portraiture was for the greater part the work of a large colony of Dutch or Walloon artists, many of whom had been driven to England by religious persecution. Marc Geeraerts, the younger, formerly of Bruges, had been the stock painter *d'apparat* at the commencement of the 17th century. He had been succeeded by an Antwerp painter, Paul Van Somer, who had infused something of naturalness and charm into the arid realism of Geeraerts and his fellow-painters. It would seem that Van Somer had fallen sick, and that there was a danger, lest the heritage of Court-painter should fall to Daniel Mytens or some other member of the school of Miereveldt from the Hague or Delft. It is possible that it was this motive, which led the Earl of Arundel to try and persuade the young Van Dyck to come to England. At all events the attempt was successful, for in November 1620 Tobie Matthew, writing to Sir Dudley Carleton, says that "Van Dike his (Rubens) famous Allievo had gone into England, and that the Kinge hath given him a Pension of £100 per annum."

A certain amount of mystery involves the first visit of Van Dyck to England and its Court. The only records of it occur among the State Accounts of the period, wherein appears in February 1620–1 an order to pay to "Anthony Vandike" the sum

of one hundred pounds, the whole pension mentioned by Matthew, although some three or four months at the most had been spent in England, "for speciall service by him performed for his Majestie." Two days later occurs "a passe for Anthonie van Dyck, gent., his Majestie's servaant to travaile for 8 monthes he haveinge obtayned his Majestie's leave in that behalf as was sygnified by the Earl of Arundell."

The evidence all points to Arundel as the introducer of Van Dyck to the English Court. It may have been as a counter-stroke against his rival in art as well as in politics, the great Duke of Buckingham, who was a patron of Mytens and the Dutch School. At all events Mytens succeeded Van Somer, as Court-painter, and the young Van Dyck obtained the King's leave to travel on the Continent. The special service rendered to the King by Van Dyck is more difficult to discover. James I. was no art-lover, like his sons Henry and Charles, but he evidently had a strong taste for portraits, especially of himself. It is possible, though far from certain, that he may have commissioned from Van Dyck the full-length portrait of himself, now at Windsor Castle, with companion portraits of the late Queen Anne and the much lamented Henry Prince of Wales, all three portraits being mere copies from existing portraits by Van Somer. This was hardly adequate employment for a painter, who was already considered to be a rival of the famous Peter Paul Rubens.

One or other of the numerous portraits of the Earl of Arundel by Van Dyck may be set down to this period, possibly the masterly portrait, formerly in the Orleans Collection and now in that of the Duke of Sutherland at Stafford House.

It may be presumed that the date of the pass, 28 February $162\frac{0}{1}$, corresponds with that of Van Dyck's return to Antwerp, but he did not leave his native land for Italy for some months to come.

Like other great portrait-painters, such as Rembrandt and Dürer, Van Dyck has left many portraits of himself by his own hand. The earliest is probably that, painted as a mere boy, now in the gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna. Some interesting studies of a youth, playing the flute, in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, have been identified by M. Hymans as studies of Van Dyck's portrait. His youthful features and figure may also be traced in the *St. Sebastian* at Munich, mentioned above.

There is no evidence to shew that Van Dyck did otherwise than proceed direct from London to Antwerp, although attempts have been made to shew, that he visited Paris and the Hague before returning. At Antwerp he was now no longer a mere assistant of Rubens, but a servant of King James I. and only absent on special leave from his royal master. It is possible that some of his finest portraits, which in costume and general appearance denote an early period in his life, were painted during these months, such as *The President Richardot and his son* (in the Louvre), the *Man drawing on his glove* (at Dresden), and perhaps the far-famed portrait of *Cornelis Van der Geest* (in the National Gallery).

A study of Van Dyck's life and works reveals the unusually rapid growth to maturity of his genius. At twenty-one he had already reached the highest point, to which mere technical skill in painting could advance him, at all events in portraiture. He could challenge Rubens on his own ground, and was prepared to go even further and compete with Titian. For this purpose he required an emancipation from the narrowing atmosphere of his native town and the over-dominating sway of Rubens. It has been suggested that Rubens himself had grown jealous of Van Dyck's rapid success, and feared him as a rival. There is little cause to believe this. Rubens's position was unassailable. As a historical painter, he had nothing to fear from Van Dyck, or any other of his pupils or imitators. In the domain of portraiture he had never sought for pre-eminence, although he might easily have gained it. Everything goes to shew, that he regarded Van Dyck with tender and almost parental interest. In going to Italy, Van Dyck was only treading in his master's footsteps, probably at his master's advice. It is possible that Rubens may have discerned, that Van Dyck's true gift was that of portraiture, and endeavoured to check the young man's ambition to wear the giant's robe, and excel as a history-painter, in which line Van Dyck's want of originality and too facile adaptive powers could not fail to have been perceived by Rubens. At all events Rubens and Van Dyck parted on the best terms, and exchanged presents. When Van Dyck quitted Antwerp on October 3, 1621, his *Lehrjahre* or years of learning were ended, and his *Wanderjahre* or years of travelling commenced.

IV

Van Dyck left Antwerp on October 3, 1621, mounted, so the story goes, on the best horse in Rubens's stables, as a parting gift from his master. He stopped a short time in Brussels, and then proceeded direct to Genoa. The pretty tale of his delay in the village of Saventhem and his painting the picture of *St. Martin* there for love of a village girl, has been finally disproved. Van Dyck was accompanied by Cavaliere Giambattista Nani, a personal friend of Rubens. They reached Genoa on November 20, where Van Dyck was welcomed by his friends (and possible relations), the brothers, Lucas and Cornelis de Wael, sons of Jan de Wael and Gertrude de Jode.

It has been stated that his first host at Genoa was Bartolommeo Giustiniani, and that it was this man, whom Van Dyck painted in the striking full-length portrait of an old man seated in a chair, which, with a companion portrait of an elderly lady, were acquired by Sir Robert Peel from the Balbi Palace at Genoa. These two portraits show strongly the Flemish influence, combined with something of the Italian majesty and grandeur, and may be ascribed to the early part of the painter's sojourn in Italy.

The memory of Rubens was still green at Genoa. Aspiring as he did to success as a historical-painter, Van Dyck evidently laid himself out to try and repeat the success of Rubens in this direction. It is probable therefore that to this period and this influence are due most of the various classical or mythological paintings, painted in the manner of Rubens, such as the *Drunken Silenus* of the Brussels Gallery, *The Young Bacchanals* (belonging to Lord Belper), which was engraved in 1628 at the expense of Cornelis de Wael, *The Triumph of Cupid*, from which drawings

exist in the Louvre at Paris and the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, *Diana and Endymion* (in the Prado at Madrid), *Jupiter and Antiope* (which exists in more than one version), and other paintings of this character, such as the wealthy and luxurious patricians of Italy were wont to take pleasure in at this date. His own portrait at this date can be traced in two fine pictures, representing *Dædalus and Icarus*, one in the collection of Earl Spencer at Althorp, the other in that of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey, and again as *Paris* in the picture now in the Wallace Collection. He is described as a youth with but little hair on his face, but combining with his youth both modesty of mind and nobility of aspect, although he was but small of stature. This description is borne out by the portraits of him by himself, one of which is in the Munich Gallery, and another appears in varying versions at St. Petersburg, in the collection of the Duke of Grafton in the National Gallery, as elsewhere. In the latter portrait the delicacy of the hand, so characteristic of Van Dyck, is especially noticeable. All these paintings are strongly impressed with the Flemish manner, although they are far from not being affected by the vicinity of the great Italian Masters. Rome was however the natural goal of every painter. Van Dyck was not deterred by the fate of many other artists of his race, whose natural talent had been strangled by the false classicism of Rome, or by the vain attempt to attain either the *terribil via* of Michelangelo, or the pure and consummate academicism of Raphael. In February, 1622, apparently after a visit to Milan, he went by boat from Genoa to Civita Vecchia, and thence quickly reached the Eternal City. It is a remarkable trait in Van Dyck's character, that he was proof against the aforesaid influences at Rome, even more so than Rubens had been, and that even in the presence of Michelangelo and Raphael his mind dwelt rather upon Titian and Tintoretto, whose acquaintance he had made as a youth in his master's studio. His stay at Rome was short, and he soon turned his steps northward. He first stopped some little time at Florence, where his friend and compatriot, Justus Suttermans, who, as a lad, had been inscribed in the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp on the same day as Van Dyck, was now installed as principal portrait-painter to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Here also he probably met for the first time, that strange genius, traveller and military commander, alchemist and privateer, Sir Kenelm Digby, who was

to be so closely associated with his life in later days. From thence he went by Bologna, the greatest art-centre of the day, but delayed little on his way to Venice.

At Venice, Van Dyck seems to have given up his time to the study of the great masters of the Venetian School, Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese. To him it must have been the realisation of a dream to see before his own eyes those masterpieces of painting, with which he had first become acquainted in Rubens's house. It may seem surprising that a young painter, whose repute was already so great, and who possessed so much personal charm himself, should have found so little patronage in Venice, the patroness of all the arts. A curious page in history may perhaps account for this apparent neglect on the part of the Venetian nobles. At the time of Van Dyck's visit there was resident at Venice for the education of her sons his friend and patroness, Alethea Talbot, Countess of Arundel. Van Dyck was already bound by many ties of obligation to the Countess. As luck would have it, his sojourn in Venice synchronised with one of the worst chapters in her history, the so-called Foscarini conspiracy. The Countess of Arundel was, in May, 1622, by popular belief, deeply involved in this plot, and was regarded as an enemy by the people, though she made the Doge and Senate apologise to her for her treatment. It is not difficult therefore to believe the tradition, that straitened means caused Van Dyck to quit Venice.

On leaving Venice Van Dyck visited the Court of the Gonzagas at Mantua, where the memory of Rubens was still radiant and glorious. At Mantua he was within reach of the school of Correggio at Parma, and that of Moretto, Moroni, and Romanino at Brescia and in its neighbourhood. According to tradition, Van Dyck accompanied his patroness, the Countess of Arundel, as far as Turin, where she certainly was in January 1623, and was strongly pressed to return with her to England. This he refused to do, being so near to Genoa. It is difficult to trace Van Dyck's travels with certainty, but he must very soon after this have returned to Rome. This step may have been due to the need for influential patronage. One of the chief patrons of the Flemish artists in Rome was Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio, who had spent some years as papal nuncio in Flanders. Van Dyck in 1623 painted *Cardinal Bentivoglio*, seated at full-length. This portrait, which

now hangs in the Palazzo Pitti at Florence, touches the high-water mark of portrait-painting. It is difficult to say whether it excels rather as a mere painting, or as an interpretation of character. At all events the portrait revealed Van Dyck's real power as a painter. Van Dyck is stated to have painted at Rome various members of the families of Colonna, Barberini, and Odescalchi, but there are few portraits by Van Dyck at Rome, which can safely be authenticated as painted by him at this period. It would seem that Van Dyck was still inspired by the desire to become a great painter of history or sacred subjects, and that he sought for employment in this direction, this being indeed the most likely source of patronage at the time. The *Virgin and Child*, the *Holy Family*, the *Passion* and *Crucifixion* of Christ were the subjects, in which Van Dyck sought to meet and rival the great Italian Masters. One painting can be safely ascribed to his stay in Rome, that of *The Stoning of St. Stephen*, painted originally for the Chiesa degli Spagnuoli at Rome, brought from thence by Godoy, Prince of Peace, and after his fall brought from Spain and purchased by Lord Egerton, in whose family it still remains.

Tradition has handed down a curious side-light upon Van Dyck's personality and his life at Rome. Bred in an atmosphere of wealth and luxury, influenced strongly by Rubens, both as an artist and a man, Van Dyck developed a sensitive and aristocratic temperament, which was strangely alien to that of his compatriots, especially those who were of the same profession as artists. There was a large colony of Netherlandish artists at Rome, who formed themselves into a club or society of their own. As at Antwerp or other towns in the Netherlands these artists met in their "rings" or clubs, as boon-companions, dubbed each other with nick-names, and poured plentiful libations at the shrines of Bacchus and of Venus. From these roysterers Van Dyck's nature shrank, and thereby incurred their malice and displeasure. They mocked his fine feathers, his aristocratic and disdainful demeanour. They called him the *pittor cavalleresco*, and as he would have nothing to do with them, they did their best to make life at Rome as unpleasant for him as possible. In this they so far succeeded, that Van Dyck left Rome and returned to the one town in Italy where he was sure of a warm and sympathetic reception, to Genoa.

V

At Genoa Van Dyck found himself among friends, notably the brothers Lucas and Cornelis de Wael, of whom he painted a fine double portrait, perhaps in order to send to the parents of the De Waels at Antwerp. This and a companion double portrait of the engravers, Pieter de Jode, father and son, so nearly related to the De Waels, were in the possession of the Chevalier J. B. Antoine at Antwerp in 1697, and passed since into the Capitol Gallery at Rome. Another friend and patron of Van Dyck was Lucas Van Uffel, a cultivated amateur, painted by Van Dyck in one of his finest portraits, that in the collection of the Duke of Sutherland at Stafford House, and perhaps also in a fine unidentified portrait in the Brunswick Gallery. Letters interchanged between Cornelis de Wael and Lucas Van Uffel narrate the effect produced by the young Van Dyck on an Antwerp painter settled at Genoa, by name Jan Roos, who was eight years senior to Van Dyck, and had been a pupil of Jan de Wael and Snyders, telling how Roos abandoned his own line of animal-painting to follow Van Dyck in his triumphant progress as a history-painter, and to become his assistant.

This is an important contribution to the little which is known about Van Dyck's life, for it shews how great a repute he had already earned as a painter of history. It seems probable that in the two or three years, which he spent at Genoa, he was as much occupied with paintings for churches and religious communities, as with the magnificent portraits of the Genoese nobles and patricians, with which his name is so gloriously associated. At Genoa it may be surmised therefore that he painted the bulk of these sacred pictures, in which the original Flemish character and the influence of Rubens is so strongly tempered by his studies of the great Italian Masters,

of Titian, Paolo Veronese, Guido, Correggio, Moretto, the Carracci and other North Italian artists, for the schools of Florence and Siena, and Umbria, as well as the academies of Rome, seem to have left no impression upon his mind. It would even appear, that at Genoa he painted important pictures which he forwarded to Antwerp. Among the paintings which might be assigned to this period are *San Antonio of Padua adoring the Infant Christ*, now in the Brera at Milan ; the wonderful *Holy Trinity*, at Buda-Pest, with its combination of Rubens and Moretto, several pictures of The Virgin and Child, and The Holy Family, such as the Correggio-like *Virgin and Child* belonging to the Duke of Westminster, the beautiful *Virgin and Child with St. Catherine*, at Buckingham Palace, the *Virgin and Child*, of which there are similar versions in the Bridgewater House and Liechtenstein Collections, and others. Small versions of *Christ on the Cross* seem to have been in great demand, and to have been painted by Van Dyck with great facility, the subject being one which to a certain extent he may be said at the time to have made his own.

Documentary evidence of Van Dyck's stay in Italy is very scanty. A correspondence between him and the painter Paggi, alluded to in after-years, has disappeared. Raffaello Soprani, the historian of Genoese painting, who was only junior to Van Dyck by some twelve years, gives some interesting details, but they are disappointingly few. Fortunately Van Dyck left behind him a sketch-book, which is of the highest importance in the history of his life in Italy.

VI

THE sketch-book, used by Van Dyck at Genoa, Venice, Rome, and elsewhere, which is now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, is the most important relic of the painter's sojourn in Italy which has fortunately been preserved. The greater number of sketches in this most precious volume are transcripts or *memoranda* from paintings by Titian, Giorgione, Paolo Veronese, and other Venetian artists, the majority being after Titian. From these sketches it is easy to see, how profound was the influence of Titian upon Van Dyck, and how studiously he assimilated his new master's motives, as readily as he had done those of his first master, Rubens. It is just the commingling of these two influences, that of Rubens and Titian, which gives the particular note or chord to the paintings of Van Dyck. Some of his sacred paintings seem avowedly based on Titian, such as *The Man of Sorrows*, in the Palazzo Rosso at Genoa, *Christ and the Tribute Money*, in the Palazzo Bianco at Genoa, *The Scourging of Christ*, belonging to M. Huybrechts at Antwerp, *Christ healing the Paralytic*, at Buckingham Palace (with its replica at Munich), and *The Virgin and Child with St. Mary Magdalene, St. John the Baptist, and King David*, of which versions exist at Berlin and in the Louvre at Paris. This last picture seems directly based upon the famous picture by Titian, *The Education of Cupid*, in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, which so much affected Van Dyck, while sketching it, that he wrote against the breast of one attendant nymph the words *quel admirabil petto.*

Among the transcripts from Titian are some, which give important clues to certain paintings by Van Dyck, usually credited to his earliest period. These are *The Crowning with*

Thorns, of which two distinct versions exist at Berlin and in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, *The Betrayal of Christ in the Garden*, a great painting, lit with flaming torches, of which two versions exist in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, and in the collection of Lord Methuen at Corsham, while a brilliant study belongs to Sir Francis Cook, Bart., at Richmond. More remarkable still is a series of transcripts from the great woodcut by Titian of *Pharaoh in the Red Sea*, in one of which the figure of a youthful horseman seems to indicate the origin of the famous *St. Martin dividing his Cloak*. The story of this picture is well-known, although facts that have come to light have disproved the old tradition. It was said that Van Dyck on his way to Italy was delayed in the village of Saventhem by the attractions of a young maiden, and whilst there painted two or three sacred pictures for the church there, including the *St. Martin*, which after various vicissitudes still remains at Saventhem as the most cherished possession of the inhabitants. It is now certain that the paintings were executed for Ferdinand de Boisschot, seigneur of Saventhem, and that the lady, to whom Van Dyck paid court at a later date, was a lady of good position, Isabella Van Ophem by name, to whom he proposed marriage but without success. The painting at Saventhem would at first sight seem to denote a period in Van Dyck's career anterior to his visit to Italy. A larger and more extended version of the same subject hangs in Windsor Castle under the name of Rubens, although everything in it savours of Van Dyck. The composition is on a more extended scale than the picture at Saventhem, and, assuming that in the case of variants upon the same theme, emendations are more likely to be found in the later than in the earlier variant, there seems good reason for attributing the picture at Saventhem to the early part of Van Dyck's residence in Italy, and the Windsor picture to a later date, about 1629, at Antwerp, after Van Dyck's return from Italy.

Van Dyck's sketch-book shews that his attention was by no means confined to the Venetian painters. He goes to Milan and notes the *Infant Saviour with a Lamb* in the famous picture of *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the Louvre, the famous *Last Supper* by the same great painter, and also *The Repose in Egypt* by Raphael, then in the church of S. Maria near S. Celso in Milan, and now in the Imperial Gallery

at Vienna. At Rome he makes careful studies of the famous antique painting, *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxana* in the Aldobrandini Palace. He sketches Raphael's portrait of *Leo X. and his Cardinals*, and draws the Ambassador from the Shah of Persia, the Englishman *Sir Robert Shirley* and his wife, whose portraits, now at Petworth, are among his finest paintings of that date. Another important painting, which Van Dyck may have finished at this time in Genoa, is *The Repose in Egypt*, of which one version is now at Florence, and another in Lord Ashburton's Collection. At a much later date Van Dyck repeated this composition for the Queen of England, with considerable variations, the latter picture probably being the famous *Vierge aux Perdrix* now in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.

One document of the highest interest is preserved in this sketch-book. In the summer of 1624 Van Dyck, whose fame was already known in the Court of Savoy at Turin, was invited to Palermo to paint Prince Filiberto Emanuele of Savoy, then viceroy of the two Sicilies, nephew to Isabella Clara Eugenia, the Regent of the Netherlands. At Palermo he painted the prince's portrait, and began a large painting of *The Virgin and Saints*, including the local saint, *S. Rosalia*, for the Oratorio della Compagnia del Rosario. Of especial interest however was his meeting with the aged painter, *Sofonisba Anguissola*, of Cremona, wife of a Lomellini at Genoa, a patrician herself and yet a famous painter among women. Sofonisba was now ninety-six years of age, and quite blind. Van Dyck sketched her from life, and perhaps painted her portrait also, since one has recently been discovered at Palermo, and he describes how she still was able to take pleasure in paintings and that she gave him valuable instructions how to paint old age. In Sofonisba Van Dyck found a link between himself and the great days of Titian and his mighty companions, most of whom the aged lady could have known, if not personally, at all events by contemporary repute. Van Dyck was however forced to leave Palermo owing to an outbreak of the plague, and returned to Genoa with his unfinished picture of *S. Rosalia*, which he completed there and dispatched to Palermo, where it still remains.

VII

To most lovers of art and to the admirers of the beautiful in painting, the chief achievements by Van Dyck at Genoa were not his sacred pictures, still less his classical or mythological, but the wondrous series of portraits, in which the painter has immortalised the great patrician families, then residing in state at Genoa. It may be said, that in the whole history of portrait-painting these Genoese portraits rank among the most excellent in the world. Both as likenesses and as paintings they are equally to be admired. In composition they have the pride and magnificence of Rubens, in their depth and richness of colour they are replete with the high-bred dignity of Titian, the wistfulness of Lorenzo Lotto or the directness of Moroni. Standing in knightly armour, riding on horseback, seated on throne-like chairs, clad in the heavy brocades and sumptuous velvets of a wealthy and prosperous race, men, women, and children, the scions of the great families of Spinola, Balbi, Brignole-Sala, Adorno, Lomellini, Durazzo, Lercari, Imperiale, Cattaneo, Pallavicini, stand among the most glorious monuments of bye-gone splendour, immortalised by the magic brush of Van Dyck. Van Dyck seems to have remained at Genoa, until some time in 1627, there being no conclusive evidence to shew that he left it at an earlier date. The jealousies of local artists are said to have again hastened his departure, but, apart from family reasons of a pressing nature, another potent inducement may have been the unexpected development of Rubens, as a politician and diplomatist, and the consequent opening for a rival painter like Van Dyck, to assert his own position at Antwerp. It should not be overlooked, that there was a school of painters in Genoa of no mean excellence,

including such men as Bernardo Strozzi, called Il Prete Genovese, with whom Van Dyck had to compete. How strong however Van Dyck's influence was, is shewn by the works of such painters as Giovanni Battista Carbone, whose works are modelled on those of Van Dyck, and have sometimes even been credited to him. It should also be noted that at Genoa (as one of the great trading ports in the Mediterranean) Van Dyck encountered some individuals, who were not without influence upon his later life. Among these were *Nicholas Lanier*, the painter-musician, then on a picture-buying mission for Charles I., and *Orazio Gentileschi*, the painter, then in active work at Genoa. Probably also it was at Genoa, on a commercial errand, that Van Dyck met the Parisian print-seller, *François Langlois of Chartres*, whose portrait as a bag-piper, painted by Van Dyck, might pass for one of the most brilliant examples of Italian painting. Here also he probably encountered for the first time a man of powerful, if possibly dangerous influence, the intriguing priest, Cesare Alessandro Scaglia. Van Dyck's return north of the Alps must have been by the route of Mont Cenis, for he stopped at the little town of St. Jean de Maurienne in Savoy, where he painted the portrait of the daughter of his host, by name Borelly, in thanks for care and hospitality during an attack of illness. He then visited Aix, where he made acquaintance with the renowned *savant*, *Nicolas Peiresc*, and drew his portrait. Traces of this intimacy are to be found in the correspondence of Peiresc with a young Flemish painter, Adriaen De Vries. It is uncertain by what route Van Dyck returned from Aix to Antwerp, but there is no evidence to shew that on this occasion he visited Paris. The easiest route across Europe in those days was by the water-way of the Rhine, and for a painter, probably burdened with the paraphernalia of his art, this would be an easier mode of return than that by which he had started, namely on horseback across France.

End of Part I

PLATE

Portrait of Anthony Van Dyck, by himself. (National Portrait Gallery).

PLATE II.

Christ bearing the Cross. (Church of St. Paul, Antwerp.)

PLATE III.

Cornelis van der Geest. (National Gallery.)

PLATE IV

Portrait of a Lady. (Collection of the Comte Della Faille de Leverghem, Antwerp.)

PLATE V.

Time Clipping the Wings of Love. (Messrs. P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London.)

PLATE VI.

St. Martin. (Collection of Capt. Holford, Dorchester House.)

PLATE VII.

Pharaoh in the Red Sea. (Part of a Woodcut by TITIAN.)

PLATE IX. *(Photo. Annan.)*

The Lomellini Family. (National Gallery, Edinburgh.)

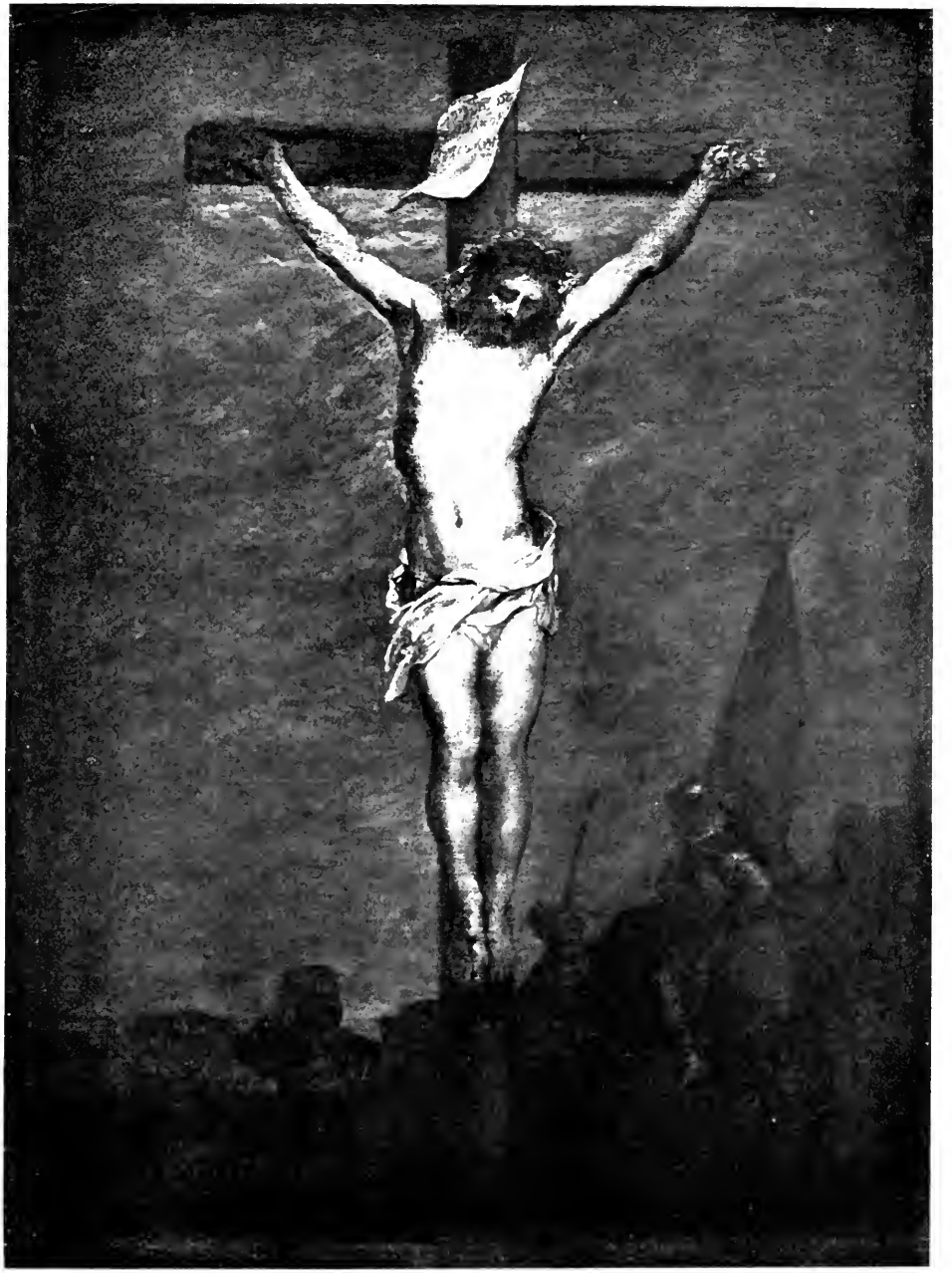

PLATE XI. (Photo. Hanfstaengl.)

Christ on the Cross. (Pinakothek, Munich.)

PLATE XII.

Sebastian Leerse, with his Wife and Son. (Grand Ducal Gallery, Cassel.)

PLATE XIII.

Portraits, called "A Prince of Nassau with his Tutor." (Collection of le Marquis de Boessière-Thiennes, Brussels.)

PLATE XIV.

Hendrik Du Bois. (Städel Institute, Frankfort.)

PLATE XV.

Hendrik Liberti. (Collection of the Duke of Grafton, London.)

PLATE XVI.

Hendrik Liberti. From the Drawing by VAN DYCK. (Print Room, British Museum.)

PLATE XVII.

The Holy Family. (Collection of M. Rodolphe Kann, Paris.)

PLATE XVIII.

The Virgin and Child, with the Penitent Saints. (Royal Gallery, Berlin.)

PLATE XIX.

Lucas Vorstermans. From the Etching by VAN DYCK.

PLATE XX

Caspar Gevertius. From the Drawing by VAN DYCK. (Print Room, British Museum.)